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Title : Issue regarding imposition of 16% Central Excise Duty on rural industries including brick chambers in the Union Budget − 2006-07.

SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN : Sir, I would like to bring to the kind attention of the Government the plight of brick chamber industries and the workers engaged in this industry throughout the country, particularly in Tamil Nadu, due to the imposition of 16 per cent highest rate of excise duty on the rural industry in the Finance Bill 2006.

There are more than 2,500 brick chamber industries in Tamil Nadu and they give employment to more than 50 lakh people belonging to the downtrodden community and OBCs. The districts of Dindigul, Erode, Salem, Namakkal, Madurai, Ramanathapuram, Sivagangai, Dharapuram and Chennai are having more brick chambers providing employment to over 50,000 people and the imposition of excise duty to the tune of 16 per cent in the Finance Bill will affect the industry drastically.

Since bricks are the basic requirement of the building industry, this unrealistic rate of excise duty will slow down the building industry, which will affect the economy also. The exemption from excise duty given to brick chambers

with annual sale up to Rs.1 crore does not help in any way. This is the only rural industry which is labour intensive and employs a good number of women.

In view of the above facts, I appeal to the Union Government to drop this proposal and do the needful at the earliest.

SHRI A. KRISHNASWAMY (SRIPERUMBUDUR): Sir, I would also like to associate with this.